

Praise for Angelique's spellbinding performance

By **DIRK DE VILLIERS** in LONDON

South African actress Angelique Rockas has won praise here for her dynamic playing of one of those twisted women characters that dramatist Tennessee Williams specialised in.

No less a person than the famous British theatre and film director Lindsay Anderson said about her performance in "In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel": "I thought you did that harsh, yet vulnerable, character extremely well."

A bruising role, as all who went to see the play at the New End Theatre in Hampstead will testify. But, when you meet Miss Rockas backstage you sense at once why she is capable of taking it on.

For the Johannesburg actress seems to have the energy of two, propelled by a sense of urgency. Yet, at one time she seemed destined for a calmer pastures academic career — her sister has been a Unisa lecturer for eight years.

Miss Rockas read English, politics, philosophy and French at the University of the Witwatersrand and it was not until she went to Cape Town that she began studying drama as well.

The theatre is far from being first choice as a career for someone from a conservative Greek Orthodox home, but a visit to London convinced her that was what she wanted.

There were difficulties at first, especially with work permits, but she managed to act with an English-Greek company in London playing important parts such as Lady Macbeth and Medea.

Backstage at the New End she talks earnestly about her career.

"By the time I got a permit, I found I liked being independent. That I like to do productions I think are valuable. I did not want to feel I had left South Africa, my parents and the comfortable life to do rubbishy work.

"So I formed my own company, the Internationalist Theatre Company, with the blessing of people such as Athol Fugard and Peter Stevenson who has directed plays in London and at The Space in Cape Town."

Genet's "The Balcony" and Brecht's "Mother Courage".

The Greater London Council help to finance the Internationalist Theatre Company's work and Miss Rockas hopes to obtain an Arts Council bursary to enable her to work with a good voice coach.

Sometimes she wonders what would happen if she returned to South Africa and the theatre there and thinks it might be a bit of a struggle.

"I am rather Latin-looking," she says "and knowing how conservative my parents are I might be self-conscious in some plays... I am conservative in myself!"

Running the Internationalist Theatre Company is sometimes very taxing, so understandably she hopes to join some good company here. Anyone who saw her spellbinding performance in the Tennessee Williams play will assert that she deserves such a chance.

S.A. actress 31 May 1983 earns accolade

From Dirk de Villiers in London

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● Nic d'Aviro as Mark and Angelique Rockas as Miriam in, *In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel*, by Tennessee Williams, performed by The Internationalist Theatre at New End Theatre, Hampstead.

The play opens today at 1.15 pm and runs until May 8, from Tuesday to Sunday. Director Alkis Kritikos, designer Stewart Laing.

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Choice

Miss Rockas realises that her choice is seldom that of the ordinary British public but, she will not compromise. She admits too to being forthright — "And that's bad at interviews. But I am what I am."

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Outstanding of achievement for Sher, K

From page 6.

in a reconstruction of the finding and man by the Israeli's seizure of Adolf Eich- in South America, and we saw her in Peter Greenway's film "The Draughtsman's Con- tract."

She came to the West End in a play, co-starring with Ian McKellen, renewing the partnership they forged in the film based on the life of D. H. Lawrence.

They played a brother and sister in "Cowardice," but, though Miss Suzman's performance was highly praised, the play closed after a short run.

She moved into a new house recently, in Keats Grove, Hampstead, so keeping up its theatrical associations — the previous owner was dramatist Alan Ayckbourn.

That will take up much of her time, one presumes — with its six bedrooms, six re-

ception rooms, and self-contained cottage in the garden.

And then there's young son Joshua too.

If Miss Suzman does take a break from the theatre this year, who can blame her? After all, she has done it all.

However, she does say: "I'm open to acting again." But she won't elaborate — "I don't think it's safe to plan."

Angelique Rockas, of Johannesburg, gave a riveting performance in Tennessee Williams' "In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel" at Hampstead's New End Theatre.

Early next year she tackles Strindberg's "Miss Julie" at the new Sir Richard Steele Theatre nearby, undaunted by the fact that one of Britain's top actresses, Cheryl Campbell, played the part in the West End in 1983.

South African dramatists had a good year with "Woza Albert" winning glow-

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